totals recorded from places like Wanjarri are probably an underestimate due to evaporative losses.

– B. M. J. HUSSEY, CALM, P.O. Box 104, Como 6152

Welcome Swallows *Hirundo neoxena* may have caused the first fatality attributed to birds in WA – On 2 September 1983 Neville Flynn, aged 42, from Osborne Park died as a result of a fatal disease transmitted by Welcome Swallow nest or faecal material. Mr Flynn died in hospital from pneumonia (3 days), Cryptococcal meningitis (3 months) (P. R. Manning, Registrar General's Office, pers. comm. 1990).

Approximately six months prior to his death Mr Flynn had held a ladder for a colleague who removed two Welcome Swallows' nests from the roof of Mr Flynn's workshop. One of the nests disintegrated as it was being removed, showering him with fine particles of nest material and/or droppings (Vince Condon, *Weekend News* 12–13 November 1983).

Mr Flynn later swept up the nest debris, apparently further inhaling the bird fungus, *Cryptococcus neoformans*, which doctors found in his body. Dr J. C. McNulty, then Commissioner for Public Health, said "it is recognised in the books that *Cryptococcus* is transmitted by pigeons to man but it is still a most unusual cause of death anywhere in the world."

Lumbar punctures confirmed, soon after Mr Flynn went to hospital, that he had fungal meningitis caused by *C. neoformans*, which was also discovered in nest samples taken from the workshop.

Pigeon excreta is the most common source of *C. neoformans*. The yeast develops on the creatine (nitrogenous substance) in pigeon manure. The yeast is carried in the intestinal tract of pigeons. Pulmonary cryptococcosis has occured in workmen who have been exposed to the yeast while demolishing old buildings where pigeons have roosted. Most of the cryptococcal infections occur from inhalation of the fungus along with the dust from areas enriched with pigeon manure (W. Weber 1979: *Health Hazards From Pigeons, Starlings and English Sparrows*, Thomson Publications, California).

I would like to thank Kevin Campbell, Deptartment of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare, Western Australia who alerted me to this incident.

– PETER COYLE, 6 Owens Court, Belmont 6104

Distribution and possible butterfly pollination of *Parsonsia* – Rye (1987, *In*: Marchant *et al.*, *Flora of the Perth Region*, Dept of Agriculture, Perth) describes *Parsonsia diaphanophleba* F. Muell. (Apocynaceae) as a woody climber endemic to the Perth region and restricted to the

banks of the Murray and Serpentine Rivers on the eastern side of the Swan Coastal Plain and on the Darling Scarp. It is classified by the Department of Conservation and Land Management as a Priority 2 species, i.e. one which is poorly known or rare although present in the conservation estate and not under immediate threat.

On 22 January 1993 I found *P. diaphanophleba* flowering at "Amarillo Farm" (32°27'S, 115°49'E) on the west bank of the lower Serpentine River, 13 km north-east of Mandurah and less than 7 km from the coast on the western side of the plain. A voucher specimen (AHB 4262) has been lodged with the Western Australian Herbarium. Only one plant was noticed but it was not searched for, and others were probably present. The next nearest known location is from "on the west bank of the Serpentine, north of Lake Goegrup" (K. Atkins collection in the Western Australian Herbarium, collected in 1983). Lake Goegrup is about 8 km downstream (south) of the site of my collection. *Parsonsia* is probably at its westernmost limit of distribution here as estuarine conditions are noticeable shortly downstream. The *Parsonsia* at "Amarillo Farm" was climbing up the stems of *Baumea articulata* on the bank of the river, under Flooded Gums, *Eucalyptus rudis*.

Flowers of this plant were being visited by a single male Lesser Wanderer butterfly, *Danaus chrysippus petilia* (Stoll). The butterfly stayed at an inflorescence for several minutes, apparently feeding from flowers which were open at the time. Presumably this species is a pollinator of *Parsonsia*, but as the butterfly was not caught, it was not possible to tell whether it was actually carrying pollen.

On 16 May 1993, *Parsonsia* was found to be in full flower in a large population on the banks of the Serpentine at "Lowlands", about 7 km south-west of Mundijong. Here, two Wanderer butterflies (*Danaus plexippus plexippus* (Linnaeus)) were seen visiting flowers of *Parsonsia*. Again, it was presumed that the butterflies were pollinating, but they were not caught to determine whether they were actually transporting pollen.

Common and Waterhouse (1982, *Butterflies of Australia, Field Edition*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney) list a number of plant species from the Asclepiadaceae as being food sources of the larvae of either the Wanderer or Lesser Wanderer, but do not list any food plants for the adult butterflies of either species. The Apocynaceae is very closely related to the Asclepiadaceae and *Parsonsia* might therefore also be a potential food plant for larvae of the Wanderer or Lesser Wanderer. Common and Waterhouse also state that larvae of the related *D. hamatus* may feed on another species of *Parsonsia* in north-eastern Australia and the related genus *Euploea* may also feed on species of Apocynaceae. Further observations would be of interest.

– ALLAN H. BURBIDGE, Dept of Conservation and Land Management, Wildlife Research Centre, PO Box 51, Wanneroo 6065.